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SYSTEMATIC COLONIZATION.

S P E E C H

OF

CHARLES BULLER, Esq., M.P.,

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

ON

THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 1843,

ON

SYSTEMATIC COLONIZATION.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1843.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

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OUT-PENSIONERS OF CHELSEA HOSPITAL.

every county in England and Wales. The hon. member stated, that it was his wish to have the bill printed, in o

in connexion with the subject.

The Hackney and Stage Carriages Bill was, after a conversation, read a third time.

Mr. M. GIBSON objected, and Mr. BROTHERTON proposed that its consideration be

CUSTOMS' BILL,

The Land Revenue Acts Bill and the Colonial Jurisdiction Bill were respectively read a second time and ordered to be printed.

Mr. BROTHERTON, for the third time, withdrew

King of Great Britain and Ireland

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S P E E C H,

&c. &c.

SIR,—I cannot enter upon the subject which I have undertaken to bring before the House to-night, without asking its indulgence on the ground of the unfeignedly painful consciousness which I have of my very small personal claim to attention, and of my utter inability to do justice to the magnitude of my subject. It would be most unjust to the House were I to allow it to be supposed that the grave and difficult nature of the question which I propose to bring before it, and its want of connexion with party feelings and party interests, will at all indispose it to yield me its kind and patient attention. I must say, in justice to the present House of Commons, with the majority of which I have seldom the happiness of voting, that, however I may deplore the violence of party spirit to which we occasionally give way, I never sat in any Parliament which has shown itself so conscious of the deteriorating character of our party strifes, and so desirous to make amends for its indulgence in them by every now and then giving a calm attention to matters of public concern, beyond and above the low domain of party. If it were not so, indeed, we should be culpable beyond our predecessors. For these, in truth, are times in which the most thoughtless can hardly fail, every now and then, to have a suspicion that

the events that are passing around us, and in which we bear a part, involve consequences of wider scope and greater moment than the interests of political rivalry. Amid the very clash and tumult of party strife in which we, like those who have gone before us, are too apt to concentrate our energies and thoughts, we cannot help being, every now and then, conscious of such heavings of the soil on which we tread as to compel us to believe that around us are fearful agencies at work that threaten the solidity of the very framework of society. We have of late had warning enough of the necessity of looking to the material condition of the country, from the existence of distress of an unusual extent, duration, and severity. Owing, too, to inquiries which we never had the wisdom or the boldness to make before, we are now in possession of a fearful knowledge of the moral and intellectual state of the great masses of our people. And from such events as the disturbances of last year, we know well what effects physical distress and moral neglect have combined to produce in the temper of the masses, and how terrible is the risk to which we are exposed from this settled, though happily as yet undisciplined disaffection? With such matters as these fresh in our memories, and reflected in our apprehensions, we should, indeed, be possessed by some judicial madness were we to take no thought of the condition of the people, or to dismiss from our consideration any schemes suggested with a view of bettering it, until we had proved their insufficiency, or exhausted their efficacy.

I do not believe, however, that there ever took place in the house a debate calculated to fill the public mind with such despair as that which was raised by my noble friend the member for Sunderland, when he brought forward his motion on the distress of the country, in a speech showing so accurate and comprehensive a know-

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ledge of the state of the country, and so wise an appreciation of the immediate remedy, that I cannot but regret that he has left me anything to do which might legitimately have been made a part of his remedial plan. For what was the result of that debate? An universal agreement as to the existence, and even the intensity of the mischief—an entire disagreement as to the remedies proposed. No one ventured on that occasion to deny the fact of very severe distress; but, at the same time, whatever measure was proposed for the relief of it was negatived by a majority which proposed no remedy of its own.

The view which I take of the existing evil, and of the appropriate remedy, would so much more be obscured than strengthened by any exaggeration, that I must guard myself against being supposed to represent the difficulties of the country as either unparalleled or desperate. It admits of no doubt, that even after so long and severe a distress as that which has for some years hung over every class and interest in the empire, we are actually a richer people, with more of accumulated wealth, more of the capital of future commerce, than we ever possessed at a former period. But still, without any exaggeration—without believing that our resources are less than they used to be—without desponding for the future, it cannot be denied that this is a period in which wealth, though actually greater, is growing at a less rapid rate than before—that it is a period of depression and stagnation—that a smaller amount of useful and profitable enterprises are being carried on now than five or six years ago—that there is less employment for capital, and that business brings in smaller profits—that there are more people out of employment, and that the wages of those who are employed are less than they used to be. The great increase of poor-rates within the last year or two,

owing to no disposition to relax the administration of the law, is an unequivocal proof of suffering in the labouring class; and the falling off of the revenue from customs, excise, stamps, and taxes, furnishes as undeniable evidence of a diminution of the comforts of the people; and though there is not the slightest ground for fearing ruin as a nation, there is evidently an amount of individual suffering, so wide and so severe, that we cannot contemplate its existence without pain, nor its prolonged duration without alarm. There is no denying that the present distress is not that of any simple class interest, or branch of industry. It can therefore be the result of no partial cause. And it has lasted so long, that there is no ground for attributing it to temporary causes, or hoping that it may cease when they shall have ceased to operate.

I do not deny the influence of temporary causes in producing the present very severe distress. I admit, with gentlemen opposite, that successive bad harvests, wars, unsettled commercial relations, the monetary and commercial derangements of other countries, particularly the United States, and an undue impulse to speculation, together with the consequent disastrous reaction, have undoubtedly combined to disturb our commerce; and I think it impossible to deny that, had these causes not been in operation, the distress which we lament would have been different in character and in intensity. But, on the other hand, I do not think that it has been shown that the operation of these temporary causes can be taken as a satisfactory solution of the whole of our distress. I think it clear that, besides these, there have been at work more permanent causes of distress; and that, in fact, the temporary causes are but forms in which the permanent evils of our state have exhibited themselves.

For instance, much of the distress has been ascribed to over-production. It has been asserted that during the

entire period of distress, with falling prices and markets becoming, day by day, flatter and flatter, this insane energy of over-production went on building more mills, multiplying fresh powers of machinery, and adding fresh heaps to the pre-existing accumulations of unsaleable wares. To a certain extent there is, I fear, too much reason to admit this account of the history of our trade, and to believe that even after the long period of distress which we have gone through, it is too probable that—instead of relief being afforded in the most obvious manner, namely, by low prices having diminished production, and the supply of our goods having, therefore, been reduced to an equality with the demand,—production having, in fact, gone on under the pressure of low prices, the supply of many kinds of goods is now almost, if not quite, as redundant as ever. But I cannot understand how this can be regarded as a full explanation of the origin of the distress. The alleged over-production may have laid the foundation for a greater future distress; but I cannot conceive how it can be made out, under the circumstances in which it occurred, that distress would have been avoided, had over-production not taken place. Can it be alleged that, during this period of over-production, capital or labour were withdrawn from their ordinary occupations? Did any trade or enterprise of any kind suffer from the diversion of capital into channels in which more than ordinary profits were expected? Was the over-production carried on by means of capital borrowed from foreigners? Were the labourers taken from the fields, or the ordinary business of trade, to work in the cotton-mills? Or were foreign labourers imported into this country to supply the scarcity of English hands? Why, it is notorious that, during the last two or three years, we were lending money to the foreigner; that there has been a considerable emigration of labourers; that after all this,

and all the over-production of which you speak, there never was so much money lying idle; and that our work-houses were getting crowded with able-bodied men, who could not get employment. If the mills, of which so much complaint is made, had not been kept in activity, the money which was required to work them would have been brought into a previously overcrowded money market; and the labourers whom they employed would have been so many more inmates of the workhouses. Is it not clear, then, that the over-production which is spoken of, however it may possibly aggravate future distress, has, in fact, only given a precarious, may be, ultimately, a mischievous employment; but still an employment which would not otherwise have been afforded to English capital and labour? If there had been no over-production, there would have been distress—different, perhaps, in form and in results—but still distress; for there would have been an additional amount of capital and labour unemployed. Your temporary cause, in this instance, instead of solving the whole problem, points us merely to permanent causes, which must be comprehended and removed ere we can hope to remove the sufferings of the people.

That you cannot explain the existing distress by temporary causes alone, is evident from the state of things in another country, in which these causes have operated in an even greater degree than here, without producing anything like the suffering which has been felt here. Whatever shocks our trade has experienced during the last few years, no one can compare them for severity with those which have been felt in the United States. Since 1836, the history of the trade of the United States has consisted of a series of crises, with intervals of stagnation. "I doubt," says Mr. Everett, in the wise and feeling answer which he recently made to a deputation of holders

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of State Stock ; " I doubt if, in the history of the world, in so short a period, such a transition has been made from a state of high prosperity to one of general distress, as in the United States, within the last six years." And yet, has there been there any of what we should call distress among the quiet traders and artizans ? of any inability to employ capital with ordinary profit ? Or any general want of employment for labour ? Of any great depression of wages ? Or any thing which we should call the extreme of destitution ? Have even the unscrupulous demagogues of their hustings or their press ventured to describe such sad scenes as those which official inspection has shown to have been but too frequent at Bolton and Stockport ? Have you heard in that country of human beings living huddled together in defiance of comfort, of shame, and of health, in garrets and in cellars, and in the same hovels with their pigs ? Have you heard of large and sudden calls on the bounty of individuals, of parishes, or of the government ? Of workhouses crowded ? Of even the gaol resorted to for shelter and maintenance ? Of human beings prevented from actually dying of starvation in the open streets, or of others allowed to expire from inanition in the obscurity of their own dwelling-places ? The plain fact is, that though hundreds of enterprises have failed, and enormous amounts of capital have been sacrificed, and credit has been paralysed, and hundreds that were wealthy at sunrise have been beggars ere the same sun was set, and thousands have been suddenly deprived of the work and wages of the day before, yet capital and labour have never failed to find immediate employment in that boundless field. That fearful storm has passed over the United States, leaving marks of tremendous havoc on its credit and wealth and progress ; but the condition of the masses has never been substantially affected. How comes it that

these temporary causes, which produce so frightful an amount of distress in England, do not, when acting with double and treble violence in the United States, produce a tithe of the suffering? Does it not show that] in this country the real mischief lies deep, and is ever at work? And that the temporary causes to which you ascribe temporary distress are of such fearful efficacy only because they aggravate the effects of causes permanently depressing the condition of the people.

I think, Sir, that we cannot contemplate the condition of this country without coming to the conclusion that there is a permanent cause of suffering in the constant accumulation of capital, and the constant increase of population within the same restricted field of employment. Every year adds its profits to the amount of capital previously accumulated; and certainly leaves the population considerably larger at its close than it was at its commencement. This fresh amount both of capital and population have to be employed; and if no further space for their employment be provided, they must compete for a share of the previous amount of profits and wages. The tendency of this cause to reduce both profits and wages is undoubtedly counteracted by what has fortunately been the still greater tendency of increased demand from foreign countries, of discoveries of fresh products of nature, and of improvements in various processes of art, especially in agriculture, to enlarge the field of employment; so that, in fact, the condition of the great mass of our countrymen has, as regards mere physical circumstances, indisputably gone on improving from century to century since the Norman conquest. But it is as indisputable that this enlargement of the field of employment, though in the long run greater, is not so steady as the growth of capital and population; and that during the intervals that elapse ere fresh employment is

found, competition, in a restricted field, oftentimes reduces both wages and profits, and occasions periods of distress.

In this country, since the peace, there has been an immense accumulation of capital, of which great part has, no doubt, been turned to excellent account in extending our trade and manufactures; in improving our agriculture; in covering the country with public works and private dwellings; and in bringing within reach of the humblest of our people comforts which formerly only the wealthy could command. But, over and above this, there has been a further accumulation of capital for which no profitable employment could be found; and which has consequently been thrown away in the most unsafe investments—lent to every government that chose to ask us for loans—sunk in South American mines, or fooled away in the bubble speculations of the day. In loans to foreign countries, I have heard that a sum so large has been sunk that I fear to repeat it; and of this a great part may be regarded as absolutely lost, owing to the dishonesty of the debtor states. Such speculations are the inevitable result of an accumulation of capital, which there are no means of investing with profit; and of course the failure of such speculations narrows the field of employment still more, by producing a general unwillingness to embark even in safe enterprises. We are now in one of those periods of stagnation of trade, while millions by which it could be profitably carried on are lying idle in the coffers of our capitalists. The general complaint is that no man can find a safe, and at the same time profitable investment for money; that the rate of interest on private security is lower than it was ever known; that the price of public securities keeps rising—not because the country is prosperous—but because the universal stagnation and want of confidence prevent

men from investing their savings in any other way ; that the profits of business also are very low ; and that every kind of business is more and more passing into the hands of great capitalists, because they can afford, on their large amounts, to be content with a rate of profit, at which the smaller capital would not produce a livelihood. This state of things is the result of having more capital than you can employ with profit ; and the cry of distress to which it gives rise will continue as long as capital continues to accumulate in a restricted field.

No one will question the fact that there is a most severe competition among labourers : that from the highest to the lowest occupation of human industry, almost every one is habitually overstocked ; that in all there is the utmost difficulty of getting employment ; and that the gains of some, if not all of every class, are diminished by the competition of redundant labour. The liberal professions are more overstocked than any others. Gentlemen of the first station and fortune find a difficulty in knowing what to do with their younger sons ; and you hear every day of the sons of gentlemen entering into occupations from which their pride in former times debarred them. Among the middle classes you hear the same complaints. There is the same intense competition amongst tradesmen, and notoriously a most severe competition amongst farmers. And the competition of educated men is nothing in comparison with the severity of that competition which exists amongst educated women, who are, unhappily, compelled to maintain themselves by their own exertions in that very limited range of employments in which our manners allow them to engage.

The extent of the competition for employment among those who have nothing to depend upon but mere manual labour unhappily admits of easy and certain proof, by a reference to the broad and indisputable conclusions forced

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on us by statistical accounts. Since 1810 more than six millions have been added to the population of Great Britain; and for all this additional population agriculture has not supplied any, or hardly any, additional employment. Yet the condition of our agricultural labourers is anything but such as we could wish. In the course of the violent recrimination which anti-corn-law lecturers and farmers' friends have been lately carrying on, we have heard fearful accounts of the deplorable physical condition of the agricultural labourers—their low wages, their wretched habitations, their scanty food, bad clothing, and want of fuel. On the other hand, we have had held up to us the habitual privations to which the labourers in various trades and manufactures are subject. The perpetual strikes in various trades—the long-continued misery of such a class as the hand-loom weavers—then the dreadful facts laid open by the inquiries put in motion by the Poor Law Commissioners and by the noble lord the member for Dorsetshire, respecting the unremitting and unwholesome labour carried on in many trades—the wretched poverty, precarious existence, and mental abasement of vast bodies of our artisans—above all, the miserable and degrading occupations to which a large portion of our population is condemned to resort, are proofs of a constant pressure of the population employed in trades and manufactures upon the means of subsistence which they afford. Look at the accounts of thousands of men, women, and children congregated together without any regard to decency or comfort in noisome sites and wretched hovels—of those who wear out their lives in the darkness of coal and iron mines, doing what is commonly considered the work of brutes, in a moral and intellectual state hardly raised above that of the mere animal—of the shirt-makers, who get ten-pence for making a dozen shirts; and of the 15,000 milliners in this metropolis,

habitually working for the scantiest wages, in close rooms, always for 13 or 14 hours a day, sometimes for days and nights together, 9 out of 10 losing their health in the occupation, and scores of them falling victims to consumption, or rendered incurably blind whenever a court mourning, or any festivity of particular magnitude tasks their powers more than usual. These are all consequences of the one leading fact, that every year that rolls over our heads brings an addition of 300,000 to the population of Great Britain, and that unless in proportion to the increase of population there is a simultaneous increase of employment—unless fresh work be found for as many pair of hands as there are fresh mouths to feed, the condition of our population must sink, and there must be acute suffering. In Ireland the condition of the people is at all times more uneasy; in any crisis, their sufferings infinitely more horrible. Can this be wondered at, when we know, on the highest official authority, that in that part of the United Kingdom there are more than 2,000,000 of persons always in distress for 30 weeks in the year from want of employment?

It is this constant swelling of population and capital up to the very brim of the cup that is the permanent cause of uneasiness and danger in this country; and this that makes the ordinary vicissitudes of commerce fraught with such intense misery to our population. When our condition in ordinary times is that of just having employment sufficient for our capital and population, any check to the necessary increase of employment, much more any defalcation of the ordinary sources, must be attended with absolute destitution to that large proportion of our people who can save nothing from their daily earnings, and who, if they chance to lose their present occupation, can find no other to turn to. Contrast this with the state of America. I dare say some

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gentlemen may smile when I remind them of Mr. Dickens's account of the factory girls at Lowell, and their joint-stock pianoforte, and their circulating library, and the 'Lowell Offering' to which they contributed the effusions of their fancy. But he must be heartless indeed who would feel no other emotions than those of ridicule, when he contrasts with the condition of our poor operatives the degree of education, the leisure, and the pecuniary means which are indicated by the possibility of having such amusements. Why, of all these Lowell girls there is hardly one that, besides all her actual comforts, has not saved more or less of money, and who, if the factory were to fail and be broken up to-morrow, and its 20,000 workpeople discharged at an hour's notice, would not be able to fall back on those savings, and would not either find immediate employment, or, as they are generally daughters of respectable farmers, or rather yeomen, be able to return to a comfortable home, from which her parents had very reluctantly spared her assistance in domestic labours. But when such failures happen in this country, the blow must, from the necessity of the case, fall for the most part on labourers, who have saved little or nothing, find no new employment open to them, and, if they return home, do so only to share want with their families, or to bring that family with themselves on the parish. Hence that extreme misery which follows in this country on any sudden cessation of a particular employment; for instance, the horrible destitution in the highlands, to which our attention was called two or three years since by the honourable member for Inverness-shire, and which arose from the substitution of barilla for kelp in our manufactures, and the sudden stoppage of the herring fishery. Hence comes that intense suffering which presses on particular localities when the course of events changes the sites of

particular trades, as when the silk manufacture moved from Spitalfields to the north, or the woollen manufactures passed from Wiltshire and Somersetshire to Yorkshire. Hence the temporary sufferings that ensue to large classes of labourers and artisans when some change of fashion, or other accident deprives them even for a while of the usual demand for their labour; and hence the more permanent and entire distress envelopes those whose particular employment is every now and then superseded by some invention of machinery most useful to the public at large, but utterly ruinous to those whom it displaces. And hence it is that causes which hardly exercise a visible effect on the labouring population of the United States, involve large bodies of ours in the most intense suffering. There the labour and capital which are displaced from one employment find every other deficient in both, and are immediately absorbed in them, to the great advantage of the community. Here they are thrown back upon other employments all previously overstocked, and hang dead weights on the productive industry of the country. And the same considerations will enable us to account for the perplexing and contradictory phenomena of our present condition, and show us how it happens that we hear a cry of stagnation of business, of want of employment, and extreme destitution throughout the industrious classes, at the same time that we see around us the most incontestable evidences of vast wealth rapidly augmenting: how it is that in this country there are seen side by side, in fearful and unnatural contrast, the greatest amount of opulence, and the most appalling mass of misery—how it is that the people of this country appear, when contemplated at one and the same time, from different points of view, to be the richest and the neediest people in the world.

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When I speak of distress and suffering among the industrious classes of this country, I must guard against being supposed to mean that I regard their physical condition as worse than it used to be. Taking the condition of the whole people of Great Britain for periods of eight or ten years at a time, I feel little doubt that, as far as external causes go, they are, on the whole, better off than they used to be. But even these assertions of a general improvement in the external condition of the people must be qualified by the admission, that there appears to be a class positively more, though comparatively less, numerous, which suffers fearfully; and that the rear of the community, in the present day, seems to lag further behind, both morally and physically, than it used to do of old. I doubt whether there ever before was in this country such a mass of such intense physical suffering and moral degradation as is to be found in this metropolis, in the cellars and garrets of Liverpool and Manchester, and in the yet more wretched alleys of Glasgow; and I have very little doubt that there never before prevailed, in any portion of our population, vice so habitual and so gross as is there to be found. The general comfort of the great body is increased; but so also is the misery of the most wretched. We witness constantly more of the extreme of suffering; we have a positively larger number of the dangerous classes in the country. I cannot but think, too, that the condition of the productive classes is more precarious than it used to be, and that great bodies of them run more frequent risk of sudden and total destitution than they used to do. It is obvious that this must be a consequence of that extreme subdivision of employment which is one of the results of increasing civilization. The more you confine the workman to one particular process or occupation, the more exposed you are to the sudden and complete displacement of the per-

sons so employed by some improvement or change of fashion, or other cause that dispenses with their services.

But it is a perfectly different kind of change in our working people which induces me to regard the occurrence of periods of extreme distress as both far more afflicting to themselves and dangerous to others, than it used to be. What matters it that the scourge be no heavier, or even that it be somewhat lighter, if the back of the sufferer be more sensitive? and what avails it that the external condition of our people is somewhat improved, if they feel the less evils which they have to bear now more acutely than they used to feel the greater which they submitted to once? That they do so is obvious to any one who listens to them; that they must do so is in the very nature of things. For, whatever may be the increase of enjoyments among our people, it is obvious that the standard of comfort has increased much more rapidly. Every class, when in full employment, commands a far greater amount of enjoyments than it used, and consequently every member of that class is accustomed to regard as necessary to a comfortable existence—to consider as a kind of rights, what his predecessor would have looked upon as luxuries, which nothing but singular good luck could place in his way. Each class is now cognizant of the habits of those which are above it, and the appetites of the poor are constantly sharpened by seeing the enjoyments of the rich paraded before them. And, as the enjoyments of the prosperous, so are the sufferings of the distressed, better known to all than they used to be. The horrible details given in the reports to which I have had occasion to refer reveal certainly no worse state of things than has for ages been going on in crowded cities, in poor villages, in unwholesome factories, and in the bowels of the earth. On the contrary, it seems clear, from the unvarying testimony

of all witnesses, that, in almost every particular, bad as these things are, they were worse formerly. But then, formerly no one knew of them. Now, zealous humanity, now statesman-like courage, that does not shrink from investigating and exposing the full extent of our social ills, in order to ascertain the extent of the remedy that must be provided, searches out the unknown misery, drags suffering and degradation from their hiding-places, and harrows up the public mind with a knowledge of the disorders to which we used to shut our eyes. Thus, the very improvements that have taken place make lesser distresses more intolerable than greater used to be; the general elevation of the standard of comfort makes each man feel privations to which he would have been insensible before. The increase of information respecting passing events diffuses over the entire mass a sense of sufferings which were formerly felt by few but the actual sufferers; and the irritation thus created is heightened by the contrast of luxuries, which wealth never could command before, and by a disparity between the ease of the rich and the want of the poor, such as no previous state of things ever presented.

It is idle, then, when we are discussing distress to make it a matter of statistical comparison between the present and other days, and to think we disprove the reasonableness of complaint, by showing that men used to complain less, when they had less of the external means of enjoyment. Men do not regulate their feelings by such comparisons. It is by what they feel that you must measure the extent of their suffering; and if they now feel more acutely than they did the pressure of such occasional distress as has always been their lot, we must be more than ever on our guard to better the general condition of the people, and to prevent the occurrence of these periods of extreme suffering. If humanity

did not induce us to do our utmost for this object, a mere politic view of our own interests would compel us: for depend upon it that the people of this country will not bear what they used; and that every one of these periods of distress is fraught with increasingly dangerous effects on the popular temper, and with increasing peril to the interests of property and order. And if you mean to keep government or society together in this country, you must do something to render the condition of the people less uneasy and precarious than it now is.

I speak plainly, because nothing but harm seems to me to result from the habit which we have of concealing the apprehensions, which no man of reflection can contemplate the future without entertaining. We are beginning to know something of our own people; and can we contemplate the state of things laid open to us, without wonder that we have stood so long with safety on this volcanic soil? Does any one suppose that we can tread it safely for ever? I need not detail to you the dangerous doctrines that circulate among the people, or the wild visions of political and social change which form the creed of millions. Such creeds are ever engendered by partial knowledge acting on general ignorance. Circulating undisturbed among the masses, they start forth into action only when distress arrays those masses in disaffection to the law. It should be the business of a wise and benevolent government to dispel such evil dispositions by enlightening its people, and diffusing among them the influence of religion and knowledge; but it should also be its care to prevent the existence of that distress, which irritates the existing ignorance of the people. While, therefore, I go heartily along with the noble lord, the member for Dorsetshire, and others, who grapple with the general ignorance as the giant evil that oppresses the country; while I feel convinced that never

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again can the government of this country rest securely on any other support than that afforded by the general diffusion of sound instruction among the subjects; and while I look to education as the great remedy on which we must rely for removing the evils of our condition, I still say that simultaneous with our efforts for this purpose must be some efforts to better the physical condition of the people. Without relieving them from the pressure of want and the undue toil, which is now often required from them, you will in vain proffer the blessings of a higher moral state to those who can give no thought to anything but the supply of their physical wants. You will always be liable to have your most benevolent and sagacious plans thwarted by some outbreak, of which the watchword shall be, like the simple and expressive cry of the insurgents of last summer—"A fair day's wage for a fair day's work." This must be secured to honest industry ere there can be contentment among the people, or any basis for operations directed to their moral good. This you must secure for them, let me tell you, if you wish to retain your own great advantages of position and property: if you mean to uphold and transmit to your children those institutions, through which you have enjoyed at once the blessings of freedom and order: if you hope to escape the tremendous wrath of a people whom force will vainly attempt to restrain, when they have utterly lost all reliance on your power or inclination to care for their well-being. Some improvement of their condition you must secure for the people, and you must secure it before long. But that you never will do until, by laying open a wider field of employment, you can succeed in diminishing that terrible competition of capital with capital and labour with labour, which is the permanent cause of distress.

It is with this view that I propose that you should investigate the efficacy of colonization, as a remedy against the distress of the country. I say as a remedy, because I do not bring it forward as a panacea—as the only, as an infallible, remedy for every ill—but as one among many remedies, which would be valuable, even if they could not go the length of entirely removing distress, provided they enabled us to render its recurrence less frequent, its operation less intense, and its pressure less severe. I say distinctly that you will not effect your purpose of permanently and fully bettering the condition of the people, unless you apply a variety of remedies directed to the various disorders of their present state. But confining myself to the economical evil that arises solely from that one cause, of which I have laboured to describe the operation, namely, the competition both of capital and labour in a restrictive field, I propose colonization as a means of remedying that evil by enlarging the field of employment. With other remedies of an economical nature, that have many advocates in this house and in the country, I come into no collision; because the mode in which they propose to attack the evil is not that of enlarging the field of employment. Some gentlemen urge the relaxation of the new poor law as a measure of justice to the labouring class; while others, with the same view, insist on a rigid execution of its provisions. But the question of the administration of the poor law is obviously a question relating merely to the distribution of the existing produce of the country, and can have no direct connexion with that of increasing its amount. Another remedy was proposed the other night, which is certainly more akin in character to the one that I urge—namely, the allotment of small pieces of land among the labouring class. But this I shall not now discuss, because the matter was disposed of the other night by an

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apparently general concurrence in what I regard as the sound view of the allotment system; and that is, that it may be made of great utility to a large portion of the labouring class, if had recourse to only as a means of supplying additional comforts and occasional independence to labourers, whose main reliance is on wages; but that it would entail the greatest curse on our labouring population, if they were ever brought to regard the cultivation of small allotments as their principal means of subsistence.

There is, however, one remedy suggested for the relief of distress, which proposes to effect its end in the same manner as that which I advocate, namely, by opening a wider field of employment to the labour and capital of the country. This it is proposed to do by freely admitting the produce of foreign countries; supporting our labourers by all the additional supplies of food which we can draw from abroad; and exchanging for that food and other produce the manufactures wrought by the labourers who subsist on that imported food. Sir, in the principles and objects of the friends of free trade I fully concur. I not only think that we ought to do what they propose, but I am ready to admit that the first and most simple and most effectual mode of enlarging the field of employment is by trading on the freest terms with all the existing markets in the world. I propose colonization as subsidiary to free trade; as an additional mode of carrying out the same principles, and attaining the same object. You advocates of free trade wish to bring food to the people. I suggest to you at the same time to take your people to the food. You wish to get fresh markets by removing the barriers which now keep you from those that exist throughout the world. I call upon you, in addition, to get fresh markets, by calling them

into existence in parts of the world which might be made to teem with valuable customers. You represent free trade as no merely temporary relief for the distresses of our actual population, but as furnishing outlets of continually extending commerce to the labour of our population, whatever its increase may be. In these anticipations I fully concur; and I would carry out the same principle, and attempt to make yet more use of these blessed results, by also planting population and capital in the vast untenanted regions of our colonies; and calling into existence markets, which, like those now in being, would go on continually extending the means of employing an increasing population at home.

I must not, therefore, be understood to propose colonization as a substitute for free trade. I do not vaunt its efficacy as superior; indeed I admit that its effect in extending employment must be slower. But, on the other hand, it will probably be surer; and will be liable to no such interruptions from the caprice of others, as trade with foreign nations must always be subject to. I grant that the restrictive policy of other nations is, in great measure, to be ascribed to the influence of our example; and I am inclined to concur in the hope that the relaxation of our commercial system will be the signal for freedom of trade in many other countries. But still we are not sure how soon this effect may be produced; how long an experience may be required to convince our neighbours of the injurious operation of monopoly; or how soon or how often the policy of protection may reappear in some shape or other, whether finding favour with the fantastic minds of statesmen, or the capricious feelings of nations, or dictated by political views totally independent of merely economical considerations. But of the legislation of your own colonies—of the fiscal policy of the

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different portions of your own empire—you can always make sure, and may rely upon being met by no hostile tariffs on their part. The commerce of the world is narrowed now not only by our own legislation, but by that of other powers; the influence of restrictive views is extending and acquiring strength among them. Within the last few years no less than eight hostile tariffs have been passed against us, more or less narrowing the demand for our manufactures. I say, then, that in the present day the restrictive policy of other nations must enter into our consideration as an element, and no unimportant element, of commercial policy; and, though I advise you to set the example of free trade to others, and extend your intercourse with them to the very utmost, still at the same time take care to be continually creating and enlarging those markets which are under the control of no legislation but your own. Show the world that, if the game of restriction is to be played, no country can play it with such effect and such impunity as Great Britain, which, from the outlying portions of her mighty empire, can command the riches of every zone and every soil and every sea that the earth contains; and can draw, with unstinted measure, the means of every luxury and the material of every manufacture that the combined extent of other realms can supply. This we have done, or can do, by placing our own people in different portions of our own dominions; secure that, while they remain subjects of the same empire, no hostile tariff can by possibility exclude us from their markets; and equally secure that, whenever they shall have outgrown the state of colonial dependence, and nominally or practically asserted, as they will do, a right to legislate for themselves, our hold on their markets will be retained by that taste for our manufactures which must result from long habit, and by that similarity of customs and wants which kindred nations

are sure to have. Under these impressions I direct your attention to colonization as a means, I should say not merely of relieving distress, but of preventing its recurrence, by augmenting the resources of the empire and the employment of the people. The suggestion of this remedy appears to be the simple result of the view of the evil, which I have described as the permanent cause of distress in this country. Here we have capital that can obtain no profitable employment; labour equally kept out from employment by the competition of labour sufficient for the existing demand; and an utter inability to find any fresh employment in which that unemployed capital can be turned to account by setting that unemployed labour in motion. In your colonies, on the other hand, you have vast tracts of the most fertile land wanting only capital and labour to cover them with abundant harvests; and, from want of that capital and labour, wasting their productive energies in nourishing weeds, or, at best, in giving shelter and sustenance to beasts. When I ask you to colonize, what do I ask you to do but to carry the superfluity of one part of our country to repair the deficiency of the other: to cultivate the desert by applying to it the means that lie idle here:—in one simple word, to convey the plough to the field, the workman to his work, the hungry to his food?

This, Sir, is the view that common sense suggests of the primary benefits of colonization. When Abraham found that the land could not support both him and Lot, "because their substance was so great," his simple proposal was that they should separate, and one take the right hand and the other the left. The same view, as well as the sad necessities of civil strife, prompted the Greeks and Phœnicians to colonize. When the youth of the city could find no land to cultivate in the narrow precincts of its territory, they banded together, crossed

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the sea, established themselves in some vacant haven, and thus at length studded the shores of the Mediterranean with cities and civilization. And in later times this has been the simple and obvious view that the pressure of population on the means of subsistence has suggested to the advocates of emigration in this country. A vast number of persons capable of working can find no employment here. Their competition beats down wages; but, when wages have been reduced to the utmost, there are still superfluous labourers, who can get no employment, and who must either starve or depend on charity. A number of the latter are induced to emigrate, and are established in Canada or Australia, at the cost, at the outside, of one year's subsistence in the workhouse. By their absence, the poor-rate is immediately relieved: if the emigration be sufficiently extensive, the due relation between employment and labour is restored, and the wages of those who remain at home are raised, while at the same time the emigrant exchanges a life of precarious dependence and squalid misery for plenty and ease in his new home. If this were all the good that could result from the change, it would still be a great gain. I know that it would require a great effort to remove so large a proportion of our population as materially to affect the labour-market. At the end of every year, the population of Great Britain is at least 300,000 more than it was at the beginning. With the best imaginable selection of emigrants, you would have to take out at least 200,000 persons every year, in order to keep your population stationary; and even such an emigration would not be sufficient, because the momentary withdrawal of labour would give an impulse to population, and ere long supply the vacuum thus created. Still, even with these limited results in view, I should say it would be most desirable that emigration should be carried

on, and on a large scale, were it only that we might at any rate turn a large number of our people from wretched paupers into thriving colonists; that we might enable them to transmit those blessings to a posterity which they could not rear at home; and that the mere temporary relief—which is, I admit, all that could result from a sudden reduction of numbers—might be made use of for a breathing-time, in which other remedies for the condition of the people might be applied with better chance of success than it would be possible to expect under the actual pressure of redundant numbers.

But the whole, nay the main advantage of colonization, is not secured by that mere removal of the labourer from the crowded mother country, which is all that has been generally implied by the term emigration. His absence is only the first relief which he affords you. You take him hence to place him on a fertile soil, from which a very small amount of his labour will suffice to raise the food which he wants. He soon finds that by applying his spare time and energies to raising additional food, or some article of trade or material of manufacture, he can obtain that which he can exchange for luxuries of which he never dreamed at home. He raises some article of export, and appears in your market as a customer. He who a few years ago added nothing to the wealth of the country, but, receiving all from charity, simply deducted the amount of food and clothing necessary for existence and decency from the general stock of the community—he, by being conveyed to a new country, not only ceases to trench upon the labour of others, but comes, after providing his own food, to purchase from you a better quality and larger quantity of the clothing and other manufactures which he used to take as a dole, and to give employment and offer food to those on whose energies he was a burden before. Imagine in some vil-

lage a couple of young married men, of whom one has been brought up as a weaver, and the other as a farm-labourer, but both of whom are unable to get work. Both are in the workhouse; and the spade of the one and the loom of the other are equally idle. For the maintenance of these two men and their families, the parish is probably taxed to the amount of 40*l.* a year. The farm-labourer and his family get a passage to Australia or Canada; perhaps the other farm-labourers of the parish were immediately able to make a better bargain with their master, and get somewhat better wages; but, at any rate, the parish gains 20*l.* a year by being relieved from one of the two pauper families. The emigrant gets good employment; after providing himself with food in abundance, he finds that he has therewithal to buy him a good coat, instead of the smock-frock he used to wear, and to supply his children with decent clothing, instead of letting them run about in rags. He sends home an order for a good quantity of broad cloth; and this order actually sets the loom of his fellow-pauper to work, and takes him, or helps to take him, out of the workhouse. Thus the emigration of one man relieves the parish of two paupers, and furnishes employment not only for one man, but for two men.

It seems a paradox to assert that removing a portion of your population enables a country to support more inhabitants than it could before; and that the place of every man who quits his country because he cannot get a subsistence, may speedily be filled up by another whom that very removal will enable to subsist there in comfort. But the assertion is as true as it is strange. Nay, the history of colonies will show that this theoretical inference suggests results which fall inconceivably short of the wonders which have been realized in fact; and that we may fairly say that the emigration of Englishmen to

our colonies has, in the course of time, enabled hundreds to exist in comfort for every one who was formerly compelled to quit his country.

The settlement of the United States was originally effected by a few handfuls of Europeans. Deducting those who perished in the hardships of early settlement, and those who were not of an age or kind to add to the population, the original stock of European emigrants, from whom the present population of the United States are derived, must have been a very small number. This fraction has now swelled to no less a number than thirteen or fourteen millions of white people. If the United States had never been settled and our emigrants had stayed at home, do you think it possible that the population of the United Kingdom would have been larger by thirteen or fourteen millions than it now is?—that we should have had and maintained in as good a state as now forty millions of people within these islands? Is there any reason for supposing that we should now have had any additional means of supporting the addition of the original emigrants? Nay, is it not absolutely certain that without colonizing the United States, we should not at this moment have been able to maintain anything like the population which at present finds subsistence within the limits of the United Kingdom? How large a portion of that population depends on the trade with the United States, which constitutes one-sixth of our whole external trade? Without that trade, what would have been the size, and wealth, and population of Manchester, and Liverpool, and Glasgow, and Sheffield, and Leeds, and Birmingham, and Wolverhampton—in fact, of all our great manufacturing districts? What would have been the relative condition of those agricultural districts, whose industry is kept in employment by the demand of that manufacturing population? What that of

this metropolis, so much of the expenditure of which may indirectly be traced to the wealth created by the American trade? In fact, what would have been the wealth and population of this country had the United States never been peopled? Considering all the circumstances to which I have adverted, I think it will be admitted that it is no exaggeration to say that, taking the United Kingdom and the United States alone, the fact of colonizing that single country has at least doubled the numbers and wealth of the English race. And can it be doubted that if, at the various periods in which the colonization of the United States was effected, an equal number of persons had gone to some other vacant territory, as extensive as the peopled portion of the United States—and many more than such a number, be it observed, perished in abortive attempts at settlement in America—I say if such a number had so settled elsewhere, is there any reason to doubt that another great nation of our race, as populous, as wealthy as the United States, might have been in existence, might have added another eight millions to our export trade, and might have supported a second Lancashire in full activity and prosperity in our island?

See, then, what colonization has done even when carried on without vigour, purpose, system, or constancy on the part of the mother country; and judge what would be its results, and with what rapidity they might be attained, if you were to colonize with system and vigour. They are results not to be measured by the relief given to the labour-market or the poor-rate; but vast as the consequences implied in the founding of great commercial empires, capable of maintaining millions of our population by creating a demand for their labour. When I propose colonization I think it wholly unnecessary to enter into nice calculations of the exact number of per-

sons whom it is necessary to withdraw annually, in order, as they say, to keep down population; because, as I have attempted to show, the numbers withdrawn from us measure but a very small portion of the good of colonization, which mainly consists in the demand created for our labour and capital by the people in our colonies; and which benefits us not in those merely whom it takes away, but in those whom it enables to exist here in comfort. I look to the great, the perfectly incalculable extension of trade which colonization has produced, and which, with all the certainty of calculation from experience, it may be expected to produce again. And such ground for expecting such results will surely justify my regarding it as that remedy for the present causes of our distress which is at once the most efficacious, and the most completely at our command.

I have directed your attention to the United States alone—the greatest colony, it is true, the world ever saw, but by no means the only proof of my assertion of the immense extension given to trade by planting settlers on new and ample fields. Compare the trade which we have with the countries of the Old World with that which we have with the colonial countries, and see how vast is the proportion which we carry on with the latter. I hold in my hand some calculations from the returns laid before the house respecting the trade and shipping of this country. The first is a statement of the declared value of British and Irish produce and manufactures exported from the United Kingdom in 1840, distinguishing the exports to old countries from those to our own possessions, and countries that have been colonies. I find that the total amount of these exports is—to foreign countries 22,026,341*l.*, while that to our own possessions, and to countries which still belong to other powers, or have recently been colonies, amounts to no less than

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28,680,089/., or nearly as four to three. Take the employment given to our shipping, and you will find the results very remarkable; for while the amount of British tonnage employed in the trade with foreign countries appears, from a similarly constructed table which I hold in my hand, to be 1,584,512 tons, that employed in trade with our foreign possessions and the colonial countries amounts to 1,709,319 tons. With respect to shipping, indeed, the result is more remarkable if we confine ourselves merely to our own colonies, for it appears that the trade of the three great groups of colonies alone—those of North America, the West Indies, and Australia—employed, in 1840, 1,031,837 tons, or nearly one-third of the whole British tonnage cleared outwards.

I mention these results merely to show the great positive amount of our present dependence on colonial trade. I know that I must be careful what inferences I draw from these facts. I am liable to be met by the answer, that all this difference between our intercourse with the two kinds of countries arises, not from any greater capacity of demand in colonial countries, but from the artificial restrictions that misdirected legislation has placed on the natural course of trade; that we have excluded foreign goods, and foreign countries have excluded our manufactures; while our colonies, on the contrary, have been compelled to take our manufactures and use our shipping. To a certain degree, no doubt, there is truth in this reply; and it cannot be doubted that our own folly has been the main cause of restricting the demand for our manufactures among foreign countries. But I think when you come to look more minutely into the details of the two kinds of trade, you will find that there is more than even legislative tricks can account for.

I will take two great classes of countries, the first being the whole of the independent nations of Europe,

and the second those which can properly be called colonial countries. From the latter class I exclude altogether the East Indies, and Java and Sumatra, because, in fact, they are old settled countries, under European dominion—the Channel and Ionian Islands, because, although British possessions, they are not colonies—Mexico and Guatemala, because the greater part of their population is the old Indian population—Western Africa, which forms an important head in the returns, because, in fact, it relates to a trade, not with European colonists, but with the Negro nations of Africa—and Texas, and New Zealand, simply because no return of the exports to those countries is to be got. I have taken down the population of the different countries of each class which enter into my list, the amount of export of British produce to each, and the amount of that produce which falls to the share of each inhabitant of each country. I find that the following European nations—Russia, France, Austria, Prussia, the rest of Germany, Cracow, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, and Greece, contain altogether a population of 211,130,000; and annually import of our goods to the value of 21,000,000*l*. On the other hand, our own colonies of St. Helena, the Cape, Mauritius, Australia, the West Indies, and British North America—the emancipated colonies, including the United States, Hayti, Brazil, Peru, Chili, and those on the La Plata, together with the nominal colony, but really independent island of Cuba, contain a total population of rather more than 36,000,000; and the exports of them amount to rather more than the exports to all the European states specified above, with their population of about six times as many. The average consumption of each inhabitant of the colonial countries is no less than 12*s*. a head, while that of the European countries is only 2*s*. a head. I grant that

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this proportion is very much swelled by our own colonies, of whose trade there is a kind of monopoly. Still, putting our own possessions out of the question, I find that the average consumption of our produce throughout what I have classed as colonial countries is not less than 7*s.* 3*d.* per head, being more than three and a half times as great as the average consumption of the European states, which is, as I said, 2*s.* a head. The greatest consumption of our goods in the whole world is that of no less than 10*l.* 10*s.* a head in the Australian colonies—the part of our empire in which the greatest amount of fertile land is open to the settler; in which there has of late been, in proportion to its population, the greatest fund derived from the sale of public lands; and into which there has been the greatest proportional immigration. This trade, which took less than 400,000*l.* worth of our goods in 1831, took more than two millions' worth in 1840, being increased fivefold in nine years; and it disposes of more of our goods than does the whole of our trade with Russia, with its population of 56,000,000, consuming only per head seven pennyworth of our goods. The comparison is curious in some other respects. Spain takes of our goods 9*d.* per head for her population; our worst customer among her old colonies, Columbia, takes four times as large a proportion; whilst her colony of Cuba takes no less than 1*l.* 4*s.* 4*d.* per head, being at the rate of more than thirty times as much as Spain. Our civilized neighbours in France take to the amount of 1*s.* 4½*d.* per head; while Hayti, composed of the liberated negro slaves of that same France—Hayti, which it is the fashion to represent as become a wilderness of Negro barbarism and sloth, takes 5*s.* 4*d.* per head, being four times the rate of consumption in France.

But I think, Sir, that I may spare myself and the House the trouble of any further proof of the advantage

of colonies—an advantage secured by no jealous and selfish monopoly of their trade, but resulting from mere freedom of intercourse with nations whose kindred origin makes them desire, whose fertile soil enables them to purchase, our commodities. I think I need use no further argument to show that when the cause of mischief here is the confinement of capital and labour within the narrow limits of the present field of employment, the most obvious and easy remedy is to let both flow over and fertilize the rich unoccupied soil of our dominions. Had our colonies been joined to the United Kingdom,—had it happened that instead of our conquering or discovering Canada or Australia, when we did, continents as vast and as rich had risen out of the sea close to the Land's End, or the west coast of Ireland—who can doubt that we should have taken no great time to discuss the theory of colonization; but that the unemployed capital and labour would speedily and roughly have settled the question by taking possession of the unoccupied soil? Suppose that instead of actually touching our island, this imaginary region had been separated from it by a strait as wide as the Menai Strait; who can doubt that, in order to facilitate its cultivation, government would have undertaken to bridge over that strait at various points? Instead of such a strait, the Atlantic and Pacific roll between us and our colonies; and the question is, as you cannot bridge over the ocean, will you think it worth your while to secure the great blessings of colonization by making arrangements for providing capital and labour with a free, cheap, and ready access to the fields in which they can be productively employed? This is the practical question to be solved. Few will dispute that colonization, when once effected, produces such benefits as I have described. But the real question is, what outlay will be requisite in order to put us in the way of re-

ceiving these benefits? And is the object, good as no one will deny it to be, worth the price we shall have to pay for it?

With the estimate I have formed of the almost boundless extent of good to be anticipated from the foundation of colonies, I should be prepared to say that it would be well worth while, if necessary, to devote large funds to the promotion of extensive and systematic colonization. I should not hesitate to propose a large grant of public money for the purpose, did I not think that the most efficient mode of colonization is that which can be carried on without any expense to the mother country. Capital and labour are both redundant here, and both wanted in the colonies. Labour, without capital, would effect but little in the colony; and capital can effect nothing unless it carries out labour with it. In the United States, where there is a general diffusion of moderate means, capital is found in conjunction with labour; and the simple process of emigration is, that the labourer moves off to the Far West, carrying with him the means of stocking his farm. Here, where the labouring class possesses no property, few of the labourers who desire to emigrate can pay for their own passage; or if they can scrape together enough for that purpose, they arrive in the colony paupers, without the means of cultivating and stocking farms. The capitalist would willingly pay for their conveyance, did they, in the first place, consist of the kind of persons who would be useful in a colony; and, secondly, had he any security for their labour when he had got them to the colony. But those whom distress urges to offer themselves as emigrants are oftentimes men past their full work, often men debilitated by disease, and still more, often men so worn to one particular process as to be

totally unfit to exercise, and unable to learn the employments suited to their life in a colony; and all generally want to carry with them a still greater number of women and children, of all ages, requiring care, instead of adding to the stock of labourers. And then the system that used to prevail in our colonies was fatal to all working for wages. Land was to be obtained so easily, that no one would think of tilling the land of another when he could get as much as he chose for himself. Labourers, as fast as they arrived in the colony, were enabled to acquire farms for themselves; and the consequence was, that the capitalist, having no security either for the services of the man whom he might carry out, or for a supply of labour from the general body of labourers in the colony, would do nothing at all in the way of taking out emigrants.

By the operation of these causes emigration used to go on in a most unsatisfactory manner; and the great purposes of colonization were in no respect attained. Numbers, it is true, emigrated; some who went to the United States, where they could get work for wages, did well. But the emigration produced no effect on the labour-market; it notoriously did not even relieve the poor-rates; comparatively little of it went to our colonies; very much of that little was of a kind to be of little service in colonial labour; and being unaccompanied by capital, often produced only extreme suffering to the emigrants, and a great dislike to emigration here. I think it may be truly said that this emigration, large in amount as it was, did very little for the colonies, and little indeed for any body, except in as far as it added to the wealth of the United States, whom the influx of Irish labourers enabled to construct those great public works which have given so amazing a stimulus to their prosperity. On the whole, emigration promised to be of little service until

Mr. Wakefield promulgated the theory of colonization which goes by his name; and suggested two simple expedients which would at once counteract all the evils which I have been describing, by attracting capital as well as carrying labour to the colonies. These suggestions consisted in putting a stop to the gratuitous disposal of the waste lands of the colonies, and selling them at a certain uniform price, of which the proceeds were to be expended in carrying out emigrants, and in making a selection of young persons of both sexes out of those who were desirous of being so assisted to emigrate. It was quite obvious that such selection of emigrants would relieve this country of the greatest amount of actual competition in the labour-market, and also of those most likely to contribute to the increase of population; while it would remove to the colonies, at the least possible expense, the persons whose labour would be most likely to be useful, and who would be most likely to make con- tinual additions to their deficient population. It was equally obvious, that, under the system of selling lands, the labourers thus arriving in the colony would be unable to get land of their own until they had acquired the means of purchasing it; that they would have, therefore, to work for wages; that, therefore, the capitalist, if he paid for their passage out, might count on their labour, and they as confidently on employment; that capitalists would, therefore, be tempted to purchase, being sure that their purchase-money would provide them with that labour which is their first necessary; and that thus you might count on getting from the sale of lands the means of carrying on a large and constant emigration in the mode adapted to confer the greatest amount of benefit on the colonies.

I may now speak of Mr. Wakefield's system of emigration as one of which the great principles—the sale of

colonial land, the expenditure of the proceeds in carrying out labourers, and the selection of the labourers from the young of both sexes, have received the sanction of the best, as well as the most general opinion. This was not done, certainly, until after a long and uphill fight, in which it was a hard matter to conquer the apathy, the ignorance, and the prejudices of the public; and harder still to make any impression on the unimpressible minds of men in office. But, fortunately, the system in question found, from the first, most able advocates among some of the most distinguished writers out-of-doors, as well as among some of the ablest members of this House; among whom I must name with particular respect my honourable friend the member for Sheffield, who, four years ago, brought this question before the house in a speech which I could wish to have been heard by one who has now to put up with mine as a substitute; my honourable friend the member for Limerick, who has since been the advocate of the same views; my noble friend the Secretary for Ireland, who gave them his powerful aid when chairman of the committee of this house on New Zealand; together with my honourable friend the member for Gateshead, and another friend of mine, whom I am sorry to be able to mention by name—I mean Mr. Francis Baring. I should trespass too much on the time of the house were I to take this public occasion of enumerating all who have at different times given these views their valuable aid, but I must not omit the name of my lamented friend Lord Durham, who in this, as in other cases, showed his thorough grasp of every colonial question; who was an early friend of a sound system of colonization; who had the opportunity of giving official sanction to these principles in his important mission to Canada; and from whom we expected still more when this, with other hopes, was buried in his

untimely grave. But it is necessary to a due understanding of the history of the question that I should acknowledge how much we owe to others, who had the opportunity, when in office, of giving executive effect to improved principles. Among these the first place is due to my noble friend the member for Sunderland, who, in February, 1832, when he had been about a year in office, took the first great step that the government has taken in the right direction, by promulgating the regulations whereby the sale of land was substituted for the old irregular habit of gratuitous grants, and the application of the proceeds to the conveyance of selected emigrants was commenced. My noble friend the member for London made the next great step when he organized the machinery of public emigration, by constituting the Land and Emigration Commissioners, and prescribed the nature of their duties in instructions which contain an admirable view of the general duties of a government with respect to colonization. My noble friend must have the satisfaction of knowing that he has left behind him a colonial reputation confined to no party; and that, among those who are interested in the well-being of our colonies and colonial trade, many of the most eager opponents of his general politics were the first to regret that their efforts resulted in removing him from the superintendence of that department. It would be ludicrous in me to pay such a compliment to the leader of my own party, were it not notoriously true. And I must not forget that the noble lord, his successor, deserves our thanks for his Act of last year, of which I do not pretend to approve of the details, but which has the great merit of having fixed the disposal of colonial lands on the basis of an act of Parliament.

By these aids, Sir, these views have met with such general acceptance, that I think I may take their elementary

principles as now being the admitted basis of colonization. Hardly any man, that ever I met with, now talks of colonization without assuming that the lands in the colonies are to be sold instead of given away; that the proceeds are to be applied to emigration; and that the emigrants are to be carried out at the public expense, and are to be selected from the fittest among the applicants. But what is even more satisfactory is that, owing to the measures taken by our government, these principles have received so much of a trial as at any rate shows that they are capable of producing some of the greatest results at which they professed to aim. No one can doubt that the sale of land instead of deterring persons from taking them, has very greatly increased the amount, I will not say nominally appropriated, but actually taken into use. No one can doubt that emigration to our colonies has received a very great impulse since the regulations of 1832 came into operation. Compare the emigration that took place to the Australian colonies, to which alone the system has been applied, in the eight years preceding the application of the new system, with that which has taken place since. In the first eight years the total number of persons who emigrated to these colonies was 11,711, giving an average of 1464 emigrants a-year. In the ten subsequent years the total emigration to the Australian colonies, including New Zealand, which had in the mean time been colonized on the same principles, amounted to 104,487, or 10,448 a-year, being an increase of more than sevenfold. Nor must you regard this as at all subtracted from the general amount of unassisted emigration, inasmuch as during the first period the total emigration to all other parts was 352,580, giving an average of 44,072 a-year; and in the second 661,039, giving an average of no less than 66,104 a-year; and this, though during a considerable portion of the latter period emigration to the Canadas was almost

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stopped by the disturbances in those colonies. And it is also put beyond a doubt, that the fund thus derivable from the sale of lands is a very large one. The sum raised by sales of land in Australia, during a period of nine years, beginning with 1833, and ending with the end of 1841, including the New Zealand Company's sales, which are on the same principle, and may be reckoned as effected by the government, through the agency of a company, amounts to a few hundreds short of two millions; a sum saved out of the fire—a sum which has been received without making any body poorer, but actually by adding immensely to the value of everybody's property in those colonies—a sum which, if applied entirely to emigration, would have carried out comfortably more than 110,000 emigrants. The results in one single colony—that of New South Wales—have been most remarkable and most satisfactory. In these nine years, the land fund has produced 1,100,000*l.*; and though only partially applied to emigration, has been the means of carrying out as many as 52,000 selected emigrants, making two-fifths, and two valuable fifths, of the present population of the colony, added to it in the space of little more than three years.

The possibility, however, of raising a very large fund by the sale of land required no proof from actual experience in our colonies; because that fact, at least, had been ascertained by a long and large experiment in the United States. In 1795, the federal government put an end to gratuitous grants; and commenced the plan of selling the waste lands of their vast territory at a system of auction, which has, however, in fact, ended in their selling the whole at the upset price, which for some years was two dollars, and latterly a dollar and a quarter per acre. The proceeds of these sales has, during the whole period, amounted to the vast sum of 23,366,434*l.* of our money;

being an average of more than half a million a-year for the whole of that time. In the last twenty years of this period, the total sum produced was nearly 19,000,000*l.*, giving an average of more than 900,000*l.* a-year. In the last ten years of the period, the total amount was 16,000,000*l.*, and the annual average 1,600,000*l.*; and in the last seven years of which I can get an account—the years from 1834 to 1840, both included—the total amount realized was more than 14,000,000*l.* of our money, or upwards of 2,000,000*l.* a-year.* This is what actually has been done in the United States; and done, let me remark, without the object of promoting emigration, almost without that of getting revenue: for it is very clear that the primary object with which the system of sale was established was not that of getting money, but of preventing that jobbing and favouritism which cannot be avoided where the government has the power of making gratuitous grants of land. The experiment cannot be regarded as a test of the largest amount which could be got for the

* Lord Stanley, in answer to this, stated that the large proceeds of these land sales had been produced by the excessive speculations of the years 1835 and 1836, since which “the bubble had burst,” and there had been a great falling off. The proceeds of the different years were—

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In 1835	.	.	3,333,292	10	0
In 1836	.	.	5,243,296	9	2
In 1837	.	.	1,459,900	12	6
In 1838	.	.	896,992	10	0
In 1839	.	.	1,346,772	10	0
In 1840	.	.	581,264	7	6

The facts stated by Lord Stanley are perfectly correct; but they do not controvert the conclusions drawn by Mr. Buller. The sales of 1835 and 1836 were no doubt swelled by the speculative spirit of the period; but it is just as obvious that the great falling off in the latter years has been the result of the extraordinary commercial distress that has pressed on the United States all the time. The only subject for wonder is that during such a period of distress as that from 1837 to 1840 there should have been so much as £4,284,930 to spare for the purchase of land.

land, consistently with a due regard to other public objects, because, in the first place, there have been large exceptional grants, which have brought a great amount of unbought land into the market. There has been a large amount of additional land, not under the control of the general government, and which had been sold by the old states, particularly Maine. And, above all, the price has, as I said, never been fixed with a view to getting the greatest amount of revenue. There is not the slightest reason to doubt that the same amount of land might have been sold at a higher price. Indeed, we know that the amount of land sold did not increase in consequence of the great diminution of price from two dollars to a dollar and a quarter in 1819; but actually fell off very considerably, and did not recover itself for the next ten years. I have very little doubt that the same amount of land would have been sold at our price of a pound; and that the sum of eighty millions might thus have been realized in forty-five years as easily as that of twenty-three-millions actually was.

I tell you what has actually been done, and what we may safely infer might have been done by a country, which, with all its vast territory, possesses actually a less amount of available land than is included within our empire; which has now a much less, and had when all this began, a very much less population than ours; and with a far less proportion even of that available for emigration; and which, with all its activity and prosperity, possesses an amount of available capital actually insignificant when compared with ours. Imagine what would have been the result, had we at the period in which the American government commenced its sales, applied the same principle with more perfect details to the waste lands of our colonies, and used the funds derived from such sales in rendering our Far West as accessible to our people as the

valleys of the Ohio and Missouri to the settlers in the United States. Hundreds of thousands of our countrymen, who now with their families people the territory of the United States, would have been subjects of the British Crown; as many, aye, even more, who have passed their wretched existence in our workhouses or crowded cities, or perished in Irish famines, or pined away in the more lingering torture of such destitution as Great Britain has too often seen, would have been happy and thriving on fertile soils and under genial climates, and making really our country that vast empire which encircles the globe. In every part of the world would have risen fresh towns, inhabited by our people; fresh ports would have been crowded by our ships; and harvests would have waved where the silence of the forest still reigns. What now would have been our commerce! What the population and revenue of our empire! This, Sir, is one of those subjects on which we may not embody in precise form the results which calculation justifies us in contemplating, lest sober arithmetic should assume the features of sanguine fancy. But this much I think I may say, that the experience of America justifies us in believing that if we, like the people of that country, had begun half a century ago, to turn our waste lands to account, we should have had a larger population, and a greater accumulation of wealth than we now have; and yet that overpopulation and over-production, and low wages, and low profits, and destitution, and distress, and discontent, would have been words of as little familiarity and meaning in our ears, as they are in those of the people of the United States.

We need, then, feel little doubt but that the new system of colonization has shown itself capable of producing all the economical results which it professes to attain. But I cannot quit the subject of its practical

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working, without calling your attention to effects quite as important, which it has shown itself capable of realizing in the way of changing the character and spirit in which our colonization has hitherto been conducted. If you wish colonies to be rendered generally useful to all classes in the mother country—if you wish them to be prosperous, to reflect back the civilization, and habits, and feelings of their parent stock, and to be and long to remain integral parts of your empire—care should be taken that society should be carried out in something of the form in which it is seen at home—that it should contain some, at least, of all the elements that go to make it up here, and that it should continue under those influences that are found effectual for keeping us together in harmony. On such principles alone have the foundations of successful colonies been laid. Neither Phœnician, nor Greek, nor Roman, nor Spaniard, no, nor our own great forefathers, when they laid the foundations of an European society on the continent, and in the islands of the Western World, ever dreamed of colonizing with one class of society by itself, and that the most helpless for shifting by itself. The foremost men of the ancient republics led forth their colonies; each expedition was in itself an epitome of the society which it left; the solemn rites of religion blessed its departure from its home; and it bore with it the images of its country's gods, to link it for ever by a common worship to its ancient home. The government of Spain sent its dignified clergy out with some of its first colonists. The noblest families in Spain sent their younger sons to settle in Hispaniola, and Mexico, and Peru. Raleigh quitted a brilliant court, and the highest spheres of political ambition, in order to lay the foundation of the colony of Virginia; Lord Baltimore and the best Catholic families founded Maryland; Penn was a courtier before he became a colonist; a set of noble

proprietors established Carolina, and intrusted the framing of its constitution to John Locke; the highest hereditary rank in this country below the peerage was established in connexion with the settlement of Nova Scotia; and such gentlemen as Sir Harry Vane, Hampden, and Cromwell did not disdain the prospect of a colonial career. In all these cases the emigration was of every class. The mass, as does the mass everywhere, contributed its labour alone; but they were encouraged by the presence, guided by the counsels, and supported by the means of the wealthy and educated, whom they had been used to follow and honour in their own country. In the United States the constant and large migration from the old to the new states is a migration of every class; the middle classes go in quite as large proportion as the labouring; the most promising of the educated youth are the first to seek the new career. And hence it is that society sets itself down complete in all its parts in the back settlements in the United States; that every political, and social, and religious institution of the old society is found in the new at the outset: that every liberal profession is abundantly supplied; and that, as Captain Marryat remarks, you find in a town of three or four years' standing, in the back part of New York or Ohio, almost every luxury of the old cities.

And thus was colonization always conducted, until all our ideas on the subject were perverted by the foundation of convict colonies; and emigration being associated in men's minds with transportation, was looked upon as the hardest punishment of guilt, or necessity of poverty. It got to be resorted to as the means of relieving parishes of their paupers; and so sprung up that irregular, ill-regulated emigration of a mere labouring class which has been one of the anomalies of our time. The state exercised not the slightest control over the hordes whom it simply allowed to leave want in one part of the empire

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for hardship in another ; and it permitted the conveyance of human beings to be carried on just as the avidity and rashness of shipowners might choose. I am drawing no picture of a mere fanciful nature, but am repeating the solemn assertions of the legislature of Lower Canada, confirmed by Lord Durham's report, when I say that the result of this careless, shameful neglect of the emigrants was, that hundreds and thousands of pauper families walked in their rags from the quays of Liverpool and Cork into ill-found, unsound ships, in which human beings were crammed together in the empty space which timber was to be stowed in on the homeward voyage. Ignorant themselves, and misinformed by the government of the requisites of such a voyage, they suffered throughout it from privations of necessary food and clothing ; such privations, filth, and bad air were sure to engender disease ; and the ships that reached their destination in safety, generally deposited some contagious fever, together with a mass of beggary, on the quays of Quebec and Montreal. No medical attendance was required by law, and the provision of it in some ships was a creditable exception to the general practice. Of course, where so little thought was taken of men's physical wants, their moral wants were even less cared for ; and as the emigrants went without any minister of religion or schoolmaster in their company, so they settled over the vacant deserts of Canada without church or school among them. Respectable tradesmen and men possessed of capital shrunk from such associations ; and if their necessities compelled them to quit their own country for a new one, they went as a matter of course to the United States. The idea of a gentleman emigrating was almost unheard of, unless he emigrated for awhile as a placeman ; and I recollect when Colonel Talbot was regarded as a kind of innocent monomaniac, who, from some strange caprice,

had committed the folly of residing on his noble Canadian estate.

Within the last ten or twelve years a great change has come over this state of things; within the last three or four years our colonization has entirely altered its character. The emigration to Port Philip, South Australia, and New Zealand has been an emigration of every class, with capital in due proportion to labourers; with tradesmen and artizans of every kind, and with the framework of such social institutions as the settlers have been used to in their native land. Clergymen and schoolmasters, and competent men of every liberal profession, are among the earliest emigrants; artists and men of science resort to a new field for their labours; in the foundation of the settlement you find funds set apart for public works, for religious endowments, and even for colleges. Associations of a religious and charitable and literary nature are formed at the outset; and these are intended to benefit not only the poor emigrants, but the helpless natives who is brought into contact with a superior race. In such settlements men of birth and refinement are tempted to emigrate; they do so in great numbers. I will be bound to say, that more men of good family have settled in New Zealand in the three years since the beginning of 1840, than in British North America in the first thirty years of the present century. It is notorious that the greatest change has taken place in the public feeling on this point, and that a colonial career is now looked upon as one of the careers open to a gentleman. This change in the character of colonization—this great change in the estimation in which it is held, is of greater moment than the mere provision of means for conducting emigration without cost to the public. It makes colonization, indeed, an extension of civilized society, instead of that mere emigration which aimed at little more than shovelling out your

paupers to where they might die, without shocking their betters with the sight or sound of their last agony.

I come, then, before you to-night as the advocate of no new fancy of my own, of no untried scheme for the realization of unattainable results. The remedy which I propose is one which the experience of the world has approved; and the mode in which I would apply it is one which sufficient experience justifies me in describing as of recognized efficacy in the opinion of all practical authorities. The great principles of the plan of colonization which I urge have been formally but unequivocally adopted by the government of this country; they have been adopted with the general sanction of public opinion here; and the colonies, as we well know, are clamorous for the extension of a system which they feel to have already given an amazing stimulus to their prosperity, and to which they look as the only means of enabling their progress to be steady. I ask, then, for no experiment. The thing has been tried, and I call upon you to make more use of the remedy, which has proved to be sound. If you think that on the system which is now recognized as the sound one, the benefits of colonization may be practically secured, then I say that the only question that remains for us is, whether and how that system can be so far extended as to realize its utmost results. For it is clear that, if it contains the means of greater relief, the condition of the country requires its extended application. It is equally clear that, though it has done great good already, it has been put in operation with no system or steadiness, not always quite heartily, certainly with no readiness to profit by experience for the purpose of either amending or extending it. It has, nevertheless, called into existence a large fund, which was not in being before. Those lands, which from all time had been barren and nominal domains—the mere

materials for jobbing, this discovery has converted into a valuable property; and it has also shown you how to apply them, so as to make them most productive to the general good of the colonies, by effecting the importation of labour. But I think I am justified in saying that, under such circumstances, the system has never been turned to full account; that if the people of the United States can purchase two millions of pounds worth of land a-year, there is spare capital in this country to purchase something more than one-eighth of that amount; that if they can dispose of some seven or eight millions a-year, we could dispose of more than one-thirtieth of that quantity; that if they can take annually from us 50,000 emigrants, besides at least as large a number from their own country, our Australian colonies could take more than one-seventh of that total amount. If we could only realize the same results as actually are realized in the United States, we should get two millions, on the average, instead of 250,000/. a year, from the sale of our lands; and the means of sending out, free of cost, some 110,000 instead of 10,000 or 12,000 poor persons every year, in addition to the large unassisted emigration that goes on. If, with our vastly superior wealth and immeasurably larger emigrant population, we fall so lamentably short of the results actually realized in the United States; nay, if with such superior powers we do not realize much greater results, I say it is sufficient proof that there is some defect in the mode of applying a sound principle. It is no defect of inclination on the part of the people to better their fortunes in another part of the empire—the amount of voluntary emigration shows that. It is no defect of inclination on the part of capitalists to invest their money in the purchase of colonial lands; there is never any difficulty in getting money in any sound system of colonization. The defect must be in the mode of

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facilitating the access of labour to the colonies; it must be from our not making the most of the good principles on which we go. I say it is our bounden duty to have the matter investigated thoroughly; and to discover and remove the faults of detail that prevent our satisfying our present most extreme need, by devising, from a sound principle, the utmost benefits that colonization can produce. It is clear that the public—not the ignorant and thoughtless—but men of the greatest speculative research—men of the greatest practical knowledge and interest in commerce, such as those who have signed the recent memorials to the right honourable baronet, from this great city, and the other principal parts of the kingdom; it is clear, I say, that the public look to colonization as affording a means of relief for our national difficulties. It is our business to prove whether that hope is sound or unsound; and either without delay to expose its want of truth, and clear it out from the public mind as a delusion that can only do harm; or, seeing it to be sound, to take care that it shall be realized, and that the means of good which God has placed at our disposal shall be turned to their full account. To do one of these things is our imperative duty. Above all, it is a duty most binding on her Majesty's government, who alone can be the instrument of thoroughly sifting such matter—who alone can give practical effect to the results of such inquiry. It is a duty of which, if they should, contrary to my hopes, neglect it, it becomes this House to remind them. And it is with this view that I have ventured to bring forward the motion of to-night.

It is not my purpose to propose any specific measure to the House. And in the first place let me guard myself against the supposition that I mean to propose anything

of a land to which I have the very strongest objection, namely, compulsory emigration. Most assuredly I have no thought of proposing that any one should be compelled to emigrate. So far from proposing compulsory emigration, I should object to holding out to any man any inducement to quit his country. On this ground I deprecate anything like making emigration an alternative for the Union Workhouse. I am very dubious of the propriety of even applying parish rates in aid of emigration. My object would be that the poor of this country should be accustomed to regard the means of bettering their condition in another part of the empire as a great boon offered them—not a necessity imposed on them by government. I do not wonder that in the old days of convict colonies and pauper emigration they shrunk from colonization, and responded to Mr. Cobbett's denunciation of the attempt of their rulers to transport them. But a better feeling has now sprung up, together with a better knowledge of the subject. The difficulty is now not to inveigle emigrants, but to select among the crowds of eager applicants; and the best portion of the labouring classes are now as little inclined to look on the offer of a passage to the colonies as a punishment, or a degradation, as a gentleman would be to entertain the same view of an offer of a cadetship or writership for one of his younger sons. The prejudice is gone; and I did imagine that the attempt to appeal to it by the agency of stale nicknames was not likely to be made in our day, had I not been undeceived by some most furious invectives against the gentlemen who signed the City memorials, which were recently delivered at Drury Lane Theatre, on one of those nights on which the legitimate drama is not performed. I cannot imagine that my esteemed friend the member for Stockport, who is reported on that occasion to have been very successful in representing the cha-

racter of a bereaved grandmother, can help, on sober reflection, feeling some compunction for having condescended to practise on the ignorance of his audience by the use of clap-traps so stale, and representations so unfounded ; and for bringing just the same kind of unjust charges against honest men engaged in an honest cause, as he brushes so indignantly out of his own path when he finds them opposed to him in his own pursuit of a great public cause. I must attribute this deviation from his usual candour to the influence of the unseen genius of the place in which he spoke, and suppose that he believed it would be out of keeping in a theatre to appeal to men's passions otherwise than by fiction.

It is not my purpose to suggest interference on the part of government to induce emigration, except by merely facilitating access to the colonies by the application of the land-fund to that object. To do this more effectually than it now does is what I ask of it, and for this purpose I only ask it to perfect the details of the system now in force. Carry out, I say to her Majesty's government, the system which was begun by the Regulations of 1832, and by the appointment of the Land and Emigration Commission, to which you made a valuable addition when you sanctioned the principle of the Act of last session, which secured the system of disposing of the lands of the colonies against the caprice of Colonial Governors, and even of Secretaries of State. Carry it out with the same sound purpose at bottom, but with more deliberate consideration of details than it was possible for the noble lord to apply to a matter of so difficult a nature, which he brought in a few months after entering on the duties of his department. I suppose that the noble lord cannot set such store by the details of a measure so rapidly prepared, that he will deny that they may be possibly amended on reconsideration ; that in fact many of the details of a sound and

large system of colonization are not touched by his Act; and that, until they are matured by assiduous inquiry, the principle can never be fairly tried, or rendered productive of the full amount of good of which it is capable.

There are some most important questions which require to be fully investigated before the system of colonization can with prudence be placed on any permanent footing; and I think it right to mention the most important of them, in order to impress upon the house how much of the success of any scheme must depend on their being rightly adjusted. There is, in the first place, a very important question as to the possibility of applying to the rest of our colonies the system which is now in force only in the Australian. It has never yet been satisfactorily explained what causes prevent the application of the principle to the land that lies open for settlement at the Cape of Good Hope, speaking not merely of the present limits of the colony, but of the boundless unappropriated extent which adjoins it—superior, apparently, in natural fertility, and free from all proprietary claims on the part of individuals. With respect to the North American colonies, I am aware that some difficulties are presented by the partial cession of the crown lands contained within them to the control of their respective legislatures. With the control of these legislatures I should not be disposed to interfere, even if the Imperial Government retain the strict legal right; but I am so convinced that the interests of the mother country and the colonies with respect to emigration are identical, that I have no doubt that the colonial legislatures would rejoice to co-operate with the imperial government in the adoption of the general principles of such a plan as might be deemed most conducive to the good of the empire. At any rate, viewing the magnitude and importance of these colonies, and their proximity to Great Britain, they

ought not to be excluded from the general plan without the fullest inquiry.

But there are very important questions with respect to the mode of applying the principles, which are still matters of doubt and controversy. Thus it is yet a question what is the "*sufficient price*" which the government should endeavour to secure from the lands in each colony. It is obvious that no more should be asked than may be applied so as to attract labourers to the colony; whatever more is imposed is a partial tax on immigrants and agriculture for the general purposes of the community, and would actually deter instead of attract settlers. On the other hand, it is contended that the price is in many instances still so low as to lead to too great an accumulation of land in private hands at the first formation of settlements; and to the subsequent drying up of government sales and land-fund when the first purchasers are compelled to bring their lands back into the market. It will be seen that it is of the utmost importance to the right working of the system that the right price should be ascertained, not only in a rough and general way, but in the case of each colony.

Another question of considerable importance is, how this sufficient price should be got—whether by fixing it on all lands as both minimum and maximum, or by trying to get the highest price which may be offered at an auction. By the latter plan it is said that the full worth of the land is most sure to be got. While it is objected to it that, besides operating with peculiar unfairness on all persons of known enterprise and skill, the tendency of the auction system is to encourage great competition for favoured town lots, lavish expenditure at the outset, an exhaustion of the capital necessary to give value to the purchase, and a consequent stagnation of the settlement after the first feverish burst of speculative ardour;

that the system of uniform price, by giving to the purchaser all the advantages derivable from the possession of peculiarly advantageous sites, presents the greatest attraction to purchasers, and gives the surest stimulus to energy in developing the resources of the colony; and that though the auction system may bring in the greatest amount of money to government at first, it will be found that, in the course of a few years, the steady produce of a fixed price will make the largest return. A subsidiary question to this is, whether the same principle of price should be uniformly applied to all kinds of land, or any distinction made between different qualities.

But a far more important matter, still in dispute, is, whether the whole of the land fund shall be devoted to the introduction of labourers, or whether a portion shall be applied to the general expenses of the colony. It is said, on the one hand, that if the object be to apply the land-fund so as to render the colony attractive to settlers, the formation of roads and public works is as requisite to that end as the supply of labour. To this it is answered, that the applying of the largest possible amount of money to the importation of labour is the surest way of increasing the population, the increase of population the surest way of raising the ordinary revenue from taxes, out of which all necessary works may be provided; and that applying any portion of the land-fund to the general expenses of the colony is merely placing at the disposal of irresponsible authority an additional and easily-acquired fund, which will be sure to be expended with that shameless extravagance, which, whether in New South Wales, or South Australia, or New Zealand, is the curse of our colonies, and the scandal of our colonial system.

There is a question of even greater magnitude and difficulty than any of these; and that is, the question

whether, viewing the great necessity of supplying labour in the early period of the colony's existence, it may not be advisable to anticipate the proceeds of the land sales by a loan raised on the security of future sales; and in this instance only has aid been demanded from the mother country in the form of a guarantee, which would enable the colony to raise money at a moderate interest. If the principle on which this suggestion is made be sound, it is of paramount importance, because it would really be bridging over the ocean, and enabling the future purchasers to repair at once to the spot which they are to render productive. No doubt great caution would be requisite in thus forestalling the resources of a colony; and I should deprecate such extravagant suggestions of large loans as have been sometimes proposed. But, on the other hand, a debt contracted for such a purpose is not unproductive waste of capital, such as our national debt, nor is it to be likened to the debts of individuals contracted for the enjoyment of the moment. It is rather to be compared to those debts which wise landlords often deliberately contract, for the purpose of giving an additional value to their estates, or to the loans by which half the enterprises of trade are undertaken, and which are to be regarded as resources of future wealth, not embarrassment.

The proposal of a loan in anticipation of the land-fund has been recently urged on the government from a quarter deserving of great weight—I mean the legislative council of New South Wales—in a report, which, I trust, has been successful in correcting an erroneous notion most fatal to colonial interests, to which the noble lord gave rather an incautious expression last year,—I mean the notion that the Australian colonies were at that time rather over-supplied with labour. It appears that the term over-supply is correct only as respects the means

of paying the cost of emigration out of the land sales of the year; that the colony exhausted its means of bringing over labourers, but that it is still, in fact, craving for it as much as ever; that the supply of nearly 24,000 labourers in one year, far from overstocking the labour-market, had produced no material reduction of wages; that the labourers and artizans imported that year were getting ample wages, and that the colony still continued capable of absorbing an annual free importation of 10,000 or 12,000 of the labouring classes.

I have briefly adverted to these important points without suggesting the decision which, I think, ought to be made with respect to any of them. The details of a plan of colonization are obviously matters in which it would be idle for any one not a member of the executive government to make any specific suggestions. To discuss the general bearings of such a question, and to impress its general importance on the general government, is all that appears to me to lie practically within the competence of this House. It is with the government that the investigation of such details as I have adverted to, and the preparation of specific measures must rest. They have the best means of collecting the most correct information and the soundest opinions on the subject. I have no wish to take the discharge of their duties on myself. I think this a stage of the question in which it would tend to no good purpose to call in the cumbrous and indecisive action of a committee of this House: but that I have done my duty when,—after thus explaining the grave necessities of our condition, and sifting the practicability of the remedy which seems most efficient,—I leave the question, with its niceties of detail and responsibilities of execution, in the hands of the advisers of the Crown. But I leave it not as a question to be discussed by one particular department as a matter of detail, or as a mere

colonial question, but as one of general import to the condition of England. The remedy, which I thus call on her Majesty's ministers to investigate, is one on which inquiry can excite no illusory hopes; for, though I believe that its adoption would give an immediate impulse to enterprise, it is one of which the greater results cannot be expected for some few years. It is one, too, which, if it fails of giving relief to the extent that I have contemplated, cannot fail of bettering the condition of many, and of extending the resources and widening the basis of our empire.

The honourable and learned Member proposed the following motion:—"That an humble address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that she will take into her most gracious consideration the means by which extensive and systematic colonization may be most effectually rendered available for augmenting the resources of Her Majesty's empire, giving additional employment to capital and labour, both in the United Kingdom and in the colonies, and thereby bettering the condition of her people."

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